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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - IRAQ PRESIDENT BUSH'S SECOND TERM

PARIS - WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

- [1](#). IRAQ
- [2](#). PRESIDENT BUSH'S SECOND TERM

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

ALTHOUGH THE STRIKES AFFECTING THE NATION THIS WEEK (TRAINS, POSTAL SERVICE, TEACHERS AND GOVERNMENT WORKERS) ARE A MAJOR EDITORIAL STORY, FRONT PAGES ARE DEVOTED TO A VARIETY OF ISSUES, INCLUDING CONDOLEEZZA RICE'S SENATE HEARINGS. LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION TITLES ITS REPORT "AMERICAN DIPLOMACY ADOPTS A DIFFERENT TONE." RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO HEADLINES "THE U.S. TURNING TO DIPLOMACY" AND QUOTES EXTENSIVELY FROM THE HEARINGS. IN HIS REPORT WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT PHILIPPE GELIE COMMENTS: "ABOUT IRAQ, WHERE VIOLENCE IS ON THE RISE, CONDOLEEZZA RICE REGRETS NOTHING. STILL SHE IS DETERMINED TO LOOK TO THE FUTURE, A FUTURE WHICH LOOKS MORE LIKE WHAT EUROPE AND OTHERS ARE HOPING FOR: 'I WILL TRY TO RE-ENFORCE ALLIANCES AND GIVE OUR SUPPORT TO OUR FRIENDS.'" GELIE DESCRIBES THE NEW BUSH-RICE TEAM AS A "TRUE POLITICAL COUPLE." "THIS POLITICAL AND PERSONAL PROXIMITY BETWEEN THE TWO IS A GUARANTEE OF INCREASING COHESION IN U.S. DIPLOMACY, AND POSSIBLY A LOSS OF NUANCE. SHE HAS THE BRAINS AND HE HAS THE GUTS."

COLUMNIST ALEXANDRE ADLER IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO DESCRIBES THE OPTIONS AWAITING PRESIDENT BUSH DURING HIS NEXT TERM. (SEE PART C)

IRAQ AND THE COMING ELECTIONS ARE THE SUBJECT OF AN ANALYSIS BY RENAUD GIRARD IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO, TITLED "IRAQ: ON THE ROAD TO TOTAL WAR," WHILE IN CATHOLIC LA CROIX EDITORIALIST BRUNO FRAPPAT WRITES ABOUT "CHAOS AND DEMOCRACY." (SEE PART C)

LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION DEVOTES ITS LEAD TO THE CONTINUING MYSTERY SURROUNDING THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THEIR JOURNALIST IN IRAQ.

LEFT-OF-CENTER LE MONDE CARRIES A FULL-PAGE PORTRAIT OF ALBERTO GONZALES, TITLED "THE TWO FACES OF ALBERTO GONZALES" THE "FIRST 'LATINO' JUSTICE MINISTER WHO IS LOYAL TO BUSH AND OIL INTERESTS." ERIC LESER'S PORTRAYAL INCLUDES GONZALES'S HUMBLE BEGINNINGS, HIS YEARS AS WHITE HOUSE LEGAL ADVISER "WHICH REPRESENT NOT ONLY A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE ERRORS BUT ALSO A LOOK INTO THIS MAN'S SHADY MORALITY" AND HIS ROLE IN THE LEGISLATION GOVERNING GUANTANAMO DETAINEES."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

IRAQ

"IN IRAQ, ON THE ROAD TO TOTAL WAR"
RENAUD GIRARD IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (01/19): "IRAQ HAS BEEN THROWN INTO A SITUATION WHICH IS MORE SERIOUS THAN JUST ANARCHY. THE AMERICANS AND THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT ARE FACING AN ARMED INSURRECTION WHICH IS SLOWLY TURNING TO TOTAL WAR. IN THIS ASYMMETRICAL WAR, THE TRADITIONAL QUALITIES OF THE U.S. ARMY DO NOT ALLOW IT TO TAKE THE UPPER HAND. IT IS LACKING ALL THE ATTRIBUTES OF A CREDIBLE OCCUPATION FORCE: MOTIVATION OF THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP AND ITS SOLDIERS, KNOWLEDGE OF THE LOCAL LANGUAGE AND CULTURE, EFFECTIVE LOCAL NETWORKS OF COLLABORATION AND THE ABILITY TO INFILTRATE ENEMY CELLS. AMERICAN FORCES ARE UP AGAINST EXTREMELY MOTIVATED GUERRILLA FIGHTERS READY TO DIE FOR A SACRED CAUSE. BECAUSE MANY ARE FORMER SOLDIERS WHO WERE REJECTED WHEN SADDAM'S ARMY WAS DISSOLVED, THEIR AMBUSHES ARE RELATIVELY SOPHISTICATED. THESE RESISTANCE FIGHTERS KNOW THEIR ENVIRONMENT. AND EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT WELL COORDINATED, THIS LACK OF COORDINATION IS RATHER AN ASSET. THEIR GOAL IS NOT SO MUCH TO PUSH THE AMERICANS OUT OF IRAQ, AN UNATTAINABLE GOAL. THEY WANT TO UNDERMINE AMERICA'S POLITICAL PLANS FOR IRAQ. AFTER THE MILITARY IMPASSE, THE AMERICANS ARE FACING A POLITICAL IMPASSE. THE FACT THAT THE SHIITE MINORITY IS ABOUT TO TAKE OVER IRAQ'S LEADERSHIP IS A TERRIBLE HUMILIATION FOR THE SUNNI COMMUNITY. THE MILITARY VICTORY AGAINST SADDAM HUSSEIN HAS LED TO

ANARCHY, WHICH IN TURN HAS LED TO TERRORISM, TERRORISM TO INSURRECTION, INSURRECTION TO CIVIL WAR: WHEN AND HOW WILL THE INFERNAL SPIRAL OF THE AMERICAN EXPEDITION TO IRAQ COME TO AN END?"

"CHAOS AND DEMOCRACY"

BRUNO FRAPPAT IN CATHOLIC LA CROIX (01/19): "IN IRAQ, DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, CHAOS CONTINUES. IN MARCH WE WILL BE CELEBRATING THE TWO-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE INVASION OF IRAQ TO TOPPLE SADDAM UNDER THE U.S. BANNER OF BRINGING FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY. TOMORROW, PRESIDENT BUSH WILL OFFICIALLY BEGIN HIS SECOND TERM IN OFFICE AFTER A BELATED AND DISCREET ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT THE FAMOUS WMD WHICH ESSENTIALLY SERVED TO JUSTIFY THE WAR, DO NOT EXIST. TEN DAYS LATER ELECTIONS IN IRAQ WILL TAKE PLACE IN A COUNTRY MORE DIVIDED THAN EVER ABOUT THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION, TORN BY ETHNIC HATE AND INHABITED BY THE WORST POSSIBLE ISLAMIC FANATICISM. WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS IN THE MIDST OF SUCH WASTE? . THE ELECTIONS ARE THE ONLY WAY OUT. THERE HAVE NEVER BEEN OPEN, LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN IRAQ. THE ELECTIONS THAT WILL BE HELD ON JANUARY 30TH WILL TAKE PLACE UNDER THE WORST POSSIBLE CONDITIONS. BUT IF THEY DO TAKE PLACE, AND EVEN IF THEY LOOK LIKE A CARICATURE OF DEMOCRACY, THEY WILL BE LESS OF A CARICATURE THAN WHAT IRAQ HAS EXPERIENCED IN THE PAST. IN IRAQ, THERE REMAINS THAT NARROW GAP WHERE A MINIMUM AMOUNT OF LEGITIMACY CAN STILL TRICKLE DOWN AFTER SUCH A MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF ILLEGITIMACY."

PRESIDENT BUSH'S SECOND TERM

"PRESIDENT BUSH'S NEW DIRECTION"

ALEXANDRE ADLER IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (01/19): "FOR HIS SECOND TERM. DOMESTIC POLICY ISSUES ARE LIKE SO MANY DAUNTING ICEBERGS BLOCKING THE WAY. IN 2000, IN MATTERS OF FOREIGN POLICY, PRESIDENT BUSH PROMISED TO RE-ESTABLISH AMERICA'S PRESTIGE. IN HIS OWN WAY, HE HAS MANAGED TO DO THIS: AMERICA IS NOT VERY POPULAR BUT IT HAS INSTILLED A CERTAIN FEAR IN ITS ENEMIES. BUT THERE IS A PRICE TO PAY: AMERICA HAS INCURRED GEO-POLITICAL DEBTS, FIRST AND FOREMOST ABOUT IRAQ. THE SHIITE VICTORY WAS LONG DESIRED BY TEHERAN. NOW IRAN WILL BE TEMPTED TO ASK FOR ITS DUE. IRAN AND SYRIA KNOW THAT AMERICA NO LONGER HAS EITHER THE MUSCLE OR THE APPETITE FOR OTHER MILITARY CONFRONTATIONS AGAINST THE MUSLIM WORLD OR POLITICAL ONES AGAINST THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE BETTER RELATIONS WITH EUROPE AND CHINA, THE U.S. MUST, PARADOXICALLY, RETURN TO CLINTON'S FUNDAMENTALS ABOUT DOMESTIC POLICY: REDUCING THE DEFICIT, AND CONSULTING WITH EUROPE AND JAPAN ABOUT CURRENCY DECISIONS." WOLFF